

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct, comprising the steps of:

- a) forming a fibrous batt from staple length fibers comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,
- b) mechanically integrating the fibrous batt into a fibrous pre-form mat,
- c) thermally treating the fibrous pre-form at a first elevated temperature for an initial duration,
- d) cooling the fibrous pre-form to less than the first elevated temperature, and
- e) thermoforming the thermally treated fibrous pre-form into a molded construct.

Claim 2 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct as in claim 1, wherein said staple length fibers are selected from the group consisting of natural fibers, synthetic fibers, and the blends thereof.

Claim 3 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct as in claim 2, wherein said staple length synthetic fibers are selected from a group consisting of polyacrylates, polyolefins, polyesters, and polyamides.

Claim 4 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct as in claim 2, wherein said staple length fibers are selected from a group consisting of cotton, wood pulp, rayon, and the combinations thereof.

Claim 5 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct as in claim 1, wherein said staple length thermoplastic fibers have a denier of at least 1.0.

Claim 6 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded construct as in claim 1, wherein said fibrous batt has a binder fiber composition of at least 50% by weight.

Claim 7 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct, comprising the steps of;

- a) forming a fibrous batt from staple length fibers comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,
- b) mechanically integrating the fibrous batt into a fibrous pre-form mat,
- c) thermally treating the fibrous pre-form at a first elevated temperature for an initial duration,

d) compressing the heated fibrous pre-form to a level less than an uncompressed fibrous pre-form and greater than the part depth a molded fibrous construct is to have,

e) cooling the fibrous pre-form to less than the first elevated temperature,

f) thermoforming the thermally treated fibrous pre-form into a molded construct.

Claim 8 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous construct, comprising the steps of;

a) forming a fibrous batt from staple length fibers comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,

b) mechanically integrating the fibrous batt into a fibrous pre-form mat,

c) thermally treating the fibrous pre-form at a first elevated temperature for an initial duration,

d) compressing the heated fibrous pre-form to a level equal to the part depth a molded fibrous construct is to have,

e) cooling the fibrous pre-form to less than the first elevated temperature,

f) thermoforming the thermally treated fibrous pre-form into a molded construct.

Claim 9 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous compound construct, comprising the steps of;

a) forming a fibrous batt from staple length fibers comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,

b) mechanically integrating the fibrous batt into a fibrous pre-form mat,

c) position at least one facing layer in face to face juxtaposition with the fibrous pre-form,

d) thermally treating the layered fibrous pre-form at a first elevated temperature for an initial duration,

e) cooling the layered fibrous pre-form to less than the first elevated temperature, and

f) thermoforming the thermally treated layered fibrous pre-form into a molded compound construct.

Claim 10 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous compound construct, comprising the steps of;

a) forming a fibrous batt from staple length fibers comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,

- b) mechanically integrating the fibrous batt into a fibrous pre-form mat,
- c) position at least one facing layer in face to face juxtaposition with the fibrous pre-form,
- d) thermally treating the layered fibrous pre-form at a first elevated temperature for an initial duration,
- e) compressing the heated layered fibrous pre-form to a level less than an uncompressed fibrous pre-form and greater than the part depth a molded fibrous construct is to have,
- f) cooling the layered fibrous pre-form to less than the first elevated temperature,
- g) thermoforming the thermally treated fibrous pre-form into a molded compound construct.

Claim 11 (withdrawn). A method of forming a molded fibrous compound construct, comprising the steps of;

- a) forming a fibrous batt from staple length fibers comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,
- b) mechanically integrating the fibrous batt into a fibrous pre-form mat,

- c) position at least one facing layer in face to face juxtaposition with the fibrous pre-form,
- d) thermally treating the layered fibrous pre-form at a first elevated temperature for an initial duration,
- e) compressing the heated layered fibrous pre-form to a level equal to the part depth a molded fibrous construct is to have,
- f) cooling the layered fibrous pre-form to less than the first elevated temperature,
- g) thermoforming the thermally treated layered fibrous pre-form into a molded compound construct.

Claim 12 (currently amended). A molded construct comprising,

- a) a fibrous mat comprised at least in part of thermoplastic polymer,
- b) said thermoplastic polymer comprised of at least one heat activated binder component,
- c) said fibrous mat having been first heated for an incubation period to the activation temperature of the binder component, then thereafter cooled to a temperature less than the activation temperature of the binder component,

said fibrous mat having thereafter been subjected to an elevated temperature, and compressed to a thickness greater than or equal to a final molded construct thickness, and thereafter cooled, and then thermoformed.

Claim 13 (canceled).

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (currently amended). A molded construct ~~comprising a fibrous batt integrated into a fibrous pre-form mat~~ in accordance with claim 12, wherein:

said fibrous ~~perform~~ mat comprises at least one facing layer, subjected to ~~an~~ said incubation period, then cooled, then subjected to said elevated temperature, cooled, and thermoformed.

Claim 16 (canceled).

Claim 17 (canceled).

Claim 18 (currently amended). A molded construct ~~comprising a fibrous batt, which is integrated into a fibrous pre-form mat~~ in accordance with claim 12, having a stiffness performance of at least 15% greater than a molded construct devoid of a fibrous pre-form.

Claim 19 (currently amended). A molded construct as in claim 7 12, wherein said molded construct is an automotive interior panel.

Claim 20 (currently amended). A molded construct as in claim 7 12, wherein said molded construct is an appliance facing.

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Amendment dated September 10, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 14, 2004

Claim 21 (currently amended). A molded construct as in claim 7 12, wherein said molded construct is an acoustic dampening shield.

Claim 22 (currently amended). A molded construct as in claim 7 12, wherein said molded construct is a domestic furnishing.